



FISHERIES ADVISORY COUNCIL - A group of dedicated citizens from all regions of the state working together for fish and fishing in Connecticut.

March 13, 2022

Senator Cohen, Representative Gresko
Environment Committee Co-Chairs
Legislative Office Building, Room 3200
Hartford, CT 06106

Environment Committee Public Hearing – March 14, 2022

S.B. No. 237 – AN ACT CONCERNING THE FUNDING OF FISH HATCHERIES

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comment on S.B. 237. The Connecticut Fisheries Advisory Council (FAC) represents the interests of fish, fish habitat, and anglers throughout the State of Connecticut. Member organizations include the CT Surfcasters Association, CT Bass Nation, Trout Unlimited, CT River Salmon Association, and many others.

The Fisheries Advisory Council supports S.B. 237. It is generally recognized that DEEP is underfunded given the broad array of environmental protection, environmental conservation, energy, and recreation programs the Agency is responsible for. As such, it is not surprising that that operation of the state fish hatcheries has been an ongoing budgetary challenge for DEEP.

The FAC supports the intent of S.B. 237 to provide funding that would enable the efficient operation of the state fish hatcheries at full production levels. Connecticut's state fish hatcheries produce primarily trout which are stocked into public waters for the purpose of providing recreational fishing. The FAC supports additional hatchery funding for the following reasons.

- Trout fishing is one of Connecticut's two largest recreational fisheries, generating over 1.5 million trips per year, approximately \$50 million in expenditures, and \$75 million in net economic impact.
- Nearly all of these trips and economic activity are dependent on the production and distribution of trout from Connecticut's state fish hatcheries.
- Anglers provide approximately \$8 million in revenue annually to the state through license fees and federal Wallop-Breaux excise taxes (made available to the DEEP Bureau of Natural Resources through the USFWS Wildlife and Sportfish Restoration Program).
- Trout fishing provides safe, outdoor, low cost, family friendly, recreation (witness DEEP's Trout Park and Community Fishing programs).

- Trout fishing is an activity that introduces innumerable children to the natural environment and sets them on the path to become lifetime conservationists and advocates for clean water and a healthy environment.

The FAC urges the Environment Committee to support S.B. 237.

Thank you again for the opportunity to provide testimony. The Fisheries Advisory Council is available at your request to provide information or respond to questions.

Testimony Submitted by William Hyatt, Vice-Chair, on behalf of the Connecticut Fisheries Advisory Council.